

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMS OF BULLYING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE REGION OF PRISHTINA, KOSOVO

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between various forms of bullying and school success among high school students in the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo. A total of 204 respondents from six different high schools participated in this research. The study focused on four primary forms of bullying: physical, verbal, social (emotional), racist, sexual, and cyberbullying, and how these experiences influence students' academic performance, including grade point average (GPA), and attendance.

Using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, data were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The results revealed that verbal and social bullying were the most commonly reported forms, and these were significantly associated with lower academic achievement and reduced school engagement. Students exposed to frequent bullying, particularly social and cyber forms, showed a notable decline in motivation, classroom participation, and attendance.

The findings emphasize the negative impact of bullying on academic outcomes and highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions in schools. The study concludes that addressing bullying in all its forms is essential for improving students' academic success and creating a safer, more supportive school environment in Prishtina.

Keywords: bullying, academic success, high school students, verbal bullying, cyberbullying

JEL Classification: I21, I28, I31, Z18

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1. Introduction

Bullying in schools has become a global concern that impacts students' well-being, behavior, and academic performance. While numerous international studies have explored the implications of bullying on student outcomes, there is limited research on this issue within the specific context of Kosovo. In the Municipality of Pristina, the capital and largest urban center of Kosovo, secondary school students may encounter various forms of bullying – verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying – which can significantly impact their academic journey.

Academic success is often shaped by a complex interplay of psychological, social, and environmental factors. Among these, peer interactions play a critical role. Negative peer experiences, particularly bullying, have been linked to poor concentration, school absenteeism, emotional distress, and low academic motivation. Given Kosovo's ongoing educational reforms and efforts to improve student well-being, understanding how bullying is related to academic outcomes is essential for developing targeted interventions.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between different forms of bullying and academic performance among secondary school students in Prishtina. The findings will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals working to create safer and more supportive school environments.

2. Relevant Research

The relationship between bullying and academic achievement has been the subject of increasing empirical investigation globally, with consistent findings indicating negative academic, psychological, and behavioral outcomes for students involved in bullying – whether as victims, perpetrators, or both. While international research provides a broad foundation, there is a growing need for context-specific studies that explore how these dynamics play out in local education systems such as those in Kosovo.

Olweus (1993), one of the pioneers in bullying research, established that victims of bullying often experience fear, low self-esteem, and academic disengagement, leading to lower school performance and increased dropout rates.

Glew et al. (2005) found that bullied students were more likely to have poor academic performance, experience difficulty concentrating, and feel unsafe in school, which contributed to a decline in classroom performance.

Juvonen, Wang & Espinoza (2011) showed that victims of cyberbullying reported higher levels of depression and anxiety and showed a significant decrease in academic motivation and school attendance.

2.1 Regional and Balkan Research

Although limited, several regional studies provide insights into bullying and academic challenges in Southeastern Europe:

- UNICEF (2017) found that in the Western Balkans, including Kosovo, up to 50% of students reported experiencing some form of bullying. The report highlighted links between victimization and reduced school performance and attendance.
- A study conducted in Albania by Zhilla et al. (2019) found that verbal and emotional bullying significantly predicted reduced academic outcomes among secondary school students, especially in urban settings.
- Stojanovic and Djordjevic (2018) analyzed bullying trends in Serbia and found that school climate and teacher attitudes play a mediating role between bullying and students' academic performance.

2.2 Research in Kosovo

The empirical picture of school violence in Kosovo is unclear (Arënliu et al., 2021). The few studies that have examined school violence among Kosovo adolescents have been narrowly limited to specific forms of violence or specific geographical areas (UNDP, 2015; Zaplluzha & Shahini, 2016). Consequently, there is a need for more representative studies that cover a wider range of school violence behaviors. Kosovo's unique history of war may increase susceptibility to higher rates of school victimization. On the other hand, Kosovo's strong family and cultural support systems foster resilience and resilience (Arënliu & Landsman, 2010; Kelmendi & Hamby, 2022) may produce different patterns of violence from other European countries (Ammermüller, 2007). Consequently, we expect lower levels of victimization compared to neighboring countries with similar histories and socio-economic characteristics. The findings from this study may be relevant to other low-income and post-conflict countries with different socio-historical dynamics than those reported in the current literature on school violence. Of all the factors, students' perceptions of dangerous

peers had the most significant impact on school victimization. The authors recommend that a multidisciplinary approach is required to address the complexity of school victimization in Kosovo.

There is a growing body of literature examining school safety and bullying in Kosovo, although specific links to academic outcomes are still emerging:

- Kosovo Education Center (KEC) surveys from recent years indicate that bullying is prevalent in both primary and secondary schools, with verbal and psychological bullying being the most common
- A 2021 study by Rugova & Shala found that students who reported higher levels of peer victimization also showed lower academic motivation and attendance in urban schools in Prishtina and Gjakova.
- Findings from the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina (2022) highlighted the lack of sustainable anti-bullying programs and the need for teacher training, particularly in managing classroom dynamics and identifying early signs of academic decline related to bullying.

2.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the relationship between different forms of bullying and academic success of secondary school students in the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo. This research aims to identify how different types of bullying - such as physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, racist and cyberbullying - affect students' academic performance, school attendance, class participation and overall motivation to succeed in school. By examining this relationship in the specific cultural, social and educational context of Prishtina, the study aims to:

- Assess the prevalence of different forms of bullying among secondary school students.
- Determine the impact of these forms of bullying on academic achievement and school engagement.
- Identify potential differences in the effects of bullying based on gender, age, grade level or socio-economic background.
- Contribute empirical evidence to inform school policies, educational interventions, and mental health support programs.
- Raise awareness among educators, parents, and policymakers about the importance of addressing bullying as a barrier to academic success.

Ultimately, the study aims to support the development of safer, more inclusive, and academically supportive school environments in Prishtina, where all students - regardless of background or social status - can thrive without fear of bullying or exclusion.

2.4 Research Problem

Bullying remains a persistent and complex problem in schools worldwide, and its consequences are particularly damaging during adolescence – a critical period for academic, emotional and social development. In the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo, anecdotal reports, NGO findings and limited national surveys suggest that various forms of bullying – physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, racist and cyberbullying – are common in secondary school settings. However, there is a notable lack of empirical research that specifically examines how these forms of bullying affect students' academic success.

While educational reforms in Kosovo have prioritized curriculum development and teacher training, the issue of school safety and peer victimization has received relatively less attention. Most schools do not have comprehensive anti-bullying programmes, and many educators are ill-equipped to recognise or address the subtle but damaging effects of bullying on academic performance. As a result, many students may suffer in silence from decreased academic motivation, difficulty concentrating, school absences, and lower academic achievement—problems that are rarely associated with experiences of bullying.

The central research problem, then, is the lack of data and systematic analysis on the relationship between specific forms of bullying and academic outcomes of secondary school students in Prishtina. Without such data, schools and policymakers are unable to design targeted interventions that address the social and academic consequences of bullying.

Key questions that arise include:

- Which forms of bullying are most prevalent among secondary school students in Prishtina?
- How does exposure to these forms of bullying correlate with academic performance and engagement in school?
- Are there differences in the impact of bullying based on demographic factors such as gender, grade level, or socioeconomic status?

Addressing this research problem is essential for improving school climate, promoting student well-being, and supporting academic success for all students in the Kosovo secondary education system.

2.5 Study Hypotheses

A set of well-formulated Hypotheses for the study on the relationship between forms of bullying and academic success among high school students in the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo:

These hypotheses are divided into the main hypothesis and several sub-hypotheses based on specific forms of bullying: Main Hypotheses (H_0 and H_1)

- Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no statistically significant relationship between forms of bullying and academic success among high school students in the Municipality of Prishtina.

- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a statistically significant relationship between forms of bullying and academic success among high school students in the Municipality of Prishtina.

Using the same scales as previous studies (Roland and Idsøe, 2001; Fandrem et al. 2009), and following the general trend of the phenomenon of Bullying in most studies, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Adolescents who are verbal bullies have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not verbal bullies.

H2: Adolescents who are victims of verbal bullying have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not victims of verbal bullying.

H3: Adolescents who are victims of cyberbullying have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not victims of cyberbullying.

H4: Adolescents who are victims of physical bullying have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not victims of physical bullying.

H5: Adolescents who are victims of sexual bullying have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not victims of sexual bullying.

H6: Female adolescents who are verbally bullied have poorer academic achievement than male adolescents who are verbally bullied.

H7: Female adolescents who are physically bullied have poorer academic achievement than male adolescents who are physically bullied.

The research is designed in general to analyze the general tendency of the phenomenon of bullying in the majority of students.

3. Methodology

This section describes the research methods used to investigate the relationship between different forms of bullying and academic achievement among secondary school students in the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo. The study aimed to identify how different types of bullying – physical, verbal, social, racist, sexual and cyberbullying – affect students' academic performance, school engagement and overall educational experience. A quantitative research approach was chosen to collect and analyze measurable data from a representative sample of students, ensuring that the findings could be generalized within the local educational context. The study used a quantitative, cross-sectional, research design, allowing data to be collected at a single point in time to identify correlations between bullying and academic outcomes. This approach was appropriate for assessing the prevalence of bullying and its potential impact on students' academic performance. Participants included students aged 16 to 17 from 6 public high schools in the Municipality of Prishtina. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure diversity in terms of school type, gender, and grade level. The final sample consisted of 204 students, providing a broad perspective on students' experiences across the region. Data collection occurred over a period from January to March 2025, with formal approval obtained from school authorities and ethical review bodies. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and participation was strictly voluntary. Written informed consent was obtained from both students and their parents or guardians (when applicable). Surveys were administered during school hours in a supervised setting to ensure privacy and address any need for clarification.

3.1 Data Design and Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize the prevalence and forms of bullying. The data were analyzed using and were used to summarize demographic data and general trends (mean, standard deviation, frequency), while Inferential Statistics such as: a. Pearson Correlation Coefficient to assess the relationship between bullying and school success, b. Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of each subscale, c. Independent Samples t-Test to compare differences between subgroups (e.g., gender, school type).

4. Results

This research included 204 students from the 11th grade in high schools in Prishtina. Gender representation is equal, with 50% female and 50% male. The school with the highest number of students is Sami Frashëri High School with 28.4%, followed by Xhevdet Doda High School (20.1%) and Ahmet Gashi High School (17.6%). The average age of the students is 16.14 years old with a standard deviation of 1.05 years. The average grade point is 3.81, indicating a good level of academic performance, with a standard deviation of 0.58.

Table 1. Demographic Data

Shkolla	N	%
"Ahmet Gashi" High School	36	17.6%
"Eqrem Qabej" High School	35	17.2%
"Sami Frashëri" High School	59	28.4%
"Xhevdet Doda" High School	41	20.1%
SH.M.T. School "28 November"	17	8.3%
"Hoxhe Kadri Prishtina" School	16	7.8%
Municipality	N	%
Pristina	204	100.0%
Gender	N	%
Female	102	50.0%
Male	102	50.0%
Class	N	%
Class 11	204	100.0%
Year	Average	Standard Dev.
	16.14 years	1.05 vjeç
Average grade	Average	Standard Deviation
	3.81	.58

4.1 Places where bullying occurred

The results show that the classroom is the main place where bullying occurs, with 65.7% of students reporting negative experiences there. School corridors are also problematic, with 57.4% of cases reported. The schoolyard includes 42.2% of cases, while toilets and public transport show fewer incidents, with only 19.6% and 19.1% respectively. A significant percentage of students, 29.9%, have experienced bullying on the way to or from school, indicating the need for safety measures outside the school environment as well.

Table 2. Places where bullying occurred

Places where bullying occurred	Yes		No	
	N	%	n	%
In the schoolyard	86	42.2%	118	57.8%
In Class	134	65.7%	70	34.3%
In the corridors	117	57.4%	87	42.6%
In the toilet	40	19.6%	164	80.4%
Other places in school	55	27.0%	149	73.0%
On the way to/from school	61	29.9%	143	70.1%
On public transport	39	19.1%	165	80.9%

4.1 Gender Comparison in relation to academic success

From the results of the gender comparison in relation to academic success, it can be observed that females have a higher average grade than males, with an average of 3.9147 compared to 3.7087 for males. This shows that females have better academic performance compared to males.

Table 3. Gender Comparison in relation to academic success

Group Statistics				
Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

Average Grade	Female	102	3.9147	.57997	.05743
	Male	102	3.7087	.57120	.05656

The independent samples t-test showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t = 2.556$, $p = 0.011$), confirming that the mean difference is significant at the 95% confidence level. The confidence interval for the mean difference (0.04706 to 0.36491) also suggests that this difference is statistically significant. These data suggest that gender has an impact on academic achievement, with females showing better average results than males.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Average Grade	Equal variances assumed	.000	.992	2.556	202	.011	.20598	.08060	.04706	.36491
	Equal variances not assumed			2.556	201.953	.011	.20598	.08060	.04706	.36491

Reliability Test – Cronbach's Alpha

The results show a high reliability of the questionnaire on forms of bullying:

- Forms of bullying by students have an Alpha Cronbach's = .869, which indicates an excellent level of internal consistency.
- Forms of bullying towards students have an Alpha Cronbach's = .811, which also indicates good reliability.
- The average reliability for both groups is 0.840, suggesting that the questions used are valid and stable for measuring the phenomenon of bullying.

Table 5. Reliability Test – Cronbach's Alpha

Group of questions	Number of variables	Alpha cronbach's
Forms of bullying by students	6	.869
Forms of bullying against students	6	.811
Average reliability		0.840

4.3 Hypothesis testing

To test the hypotheses, Spearman and Pearson correlation tests were used to assess the relationship between different forms of bullying and adolescents' academic success. For hypotheses involving ordinal variables, Spearman's coefficient was applied, while for interval variables, Pearson's coefficient was used. The results showed that all forms of bullying had a significant negative relationship with grade point average, confirming that adolescents who experience or practice bullying have poorer academic success. Furthermore, gender-separated analysis showed that bullied girls face more pronounced consequences in school results compared to boys.

H1. Adolescents who are verbally bullies have poorer academic success than adolescents who are not verbally bullies.

To analyze the relationship between verbal bullying and academic achievement, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was used. This test is suitable for measuring the relationship between two ordinal variables or non-normal data, indicating the direction and strength of the relationship between them.

The independent variable in this analysis is verbal bullying, which is measured based on the frequency of verbal harassment, such as name-calling, gossiping, or persistent bullying. This variable affects the results of adolescents' academic achievement. The dependent variable is the adolescents' average grade point average, which represents their academic achievement. This indicator serves to understand whether verbal bullying behaviors have a negative effect on students' academic performance.

Table 6. Hypothesis H1 Correlations

Did you verbally bully others by teasing others or “calling” them things? (name-calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).			Average grade
Spearman's rho	Did you verbally bully others	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	by teasing others or “calling”	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	them things? (name-calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).	N	204
Average grade	Correlation Coefficient		-.203**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N		204

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Spearman correlation test show a negative and significant relationship between verbal bullying and academic achievement ($\rho = -0.203$, $p = 0.004$). This indicates that adolescents who engage in more verbal bullying tend to have lower average grades.

The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.203) indicates that the more an adolescent engages in verbal bullying, the lower his average grade. Although the relationship is weak, it is statistically significant. Since $p = 0.004$ is less than the 0.01 significance level, we can conclude that this effect is not random. Therefore, there is a real negative impact of verbal bullying on the academic achievement of adolescents.

H2. Adolescents who are victims of verbal bullying have poorer academic performance than adolescents who are not victims of verbal bullying.

This analysis used the Pearson correlation, which measures the linear relationship between two continuous variables. This test determines the magnitude and direction of the relationship between experiencing verbal bullying and academic achievement (grade point average). The independent variable in this analysis is experiencing verbal bullying, which is measured by asking whether an adolescent has been a victim of verbal harassment, including name-calling, gossiping, or persistent bullying. The dependent variable is the adolescents' grade point average, which represents their academic achievement. This variable is used to assess whether victims of verbal bullying have poorer academic performance.

Table 7. Hypothesis H2 Correlations

Have you been verbally bullied by others by teasing you or “calling” you things? (name calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).			Average grade
Have you been verbally bullied by others by teasing you or “calling” you things? (name calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).	Pearson Correlation	1	-.194**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	204	204
Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.194**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	204	204

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis show a negative and significant relationship between experiencing verbal bullying and academic achievement ($r = -0.194$, $p = 0.006$). This indicates that adolescents who are victims of verbal bullying tend to have lower average grades.

The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.194) suggests that experiencing verbal bullying is associated with a small but significant decrease in academic achievement. Since $p = 0.006$ is less than the 0.01 significance level, we can conclude that this relationship is statistically significant and not coincidental. Hypothesis H2, which states that "Adolescents who are victims of verbal bullying have poorer academic achievement than those who are not victims of verbal bullying," is supported by the data.

H3. Adolescents who are victims of cyberbullying have poorer academic achievement than adolescents who are not victims of cyberbullying.

This analysis used the Pearson correlation, which measures the linear relationship between two continuous variables. This test is used to determine whether there is a relationship between experiencing cyberbullying and academic achievement, as measured by grade point average. The independent variable in this case is experiencing cyberbullying, which includes threats, harassment, or humiliation that occur via the Internet, email, or social media. The dependent variable is the adolescents' grade point average, which represents their academic achievement.

Table 8. Hypothesis H3 Correlations

Have you been cyberbullied by other students via computers and mobile phones, threatened, harassed, humiliated? (email, websites, chat rooms, instant messages and SMS)		Average grade
Have you been cyberbullied by other students via computers and mobile phones, threatened, harassed, humiliated? (email, websites, chat rooms, instant messages and SMS)	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.171*
	N	204
Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.171*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014
	N	204

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the analysis show a negative and statistically significant correlation between the experience of cyberbullying and academic achievement ($r = -0.171$, $p = 0.014$).

The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.171) suggests that the more an adolescent is a victim of cyberbullying, the lower his or her average grade. Furthermore, since $p = 0.014$ is less than the 0.05 significance level, this relationship is statistically significant, meaning that the effect is not random.

H4. Adolescents who are victims of physical bullying have poorer academic achievement than adolescents who are not victims of physical bullying.

This analysis used the Pearson correlation, which measures the linear relationship between experiencing physical bullying and academic achievement, as measured by grade point average. This test determines whether there is a statistically significant relationship between these two variables. Independent variable: Experiencing physical bullying, which includes acts such as kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, or hair pulling. Dependent variable: The adolescents' grade point average, which measures their academic achievement.

Table 9. Hypothesis H4 Correlations

Have you been physically bullied by other students at school? (kicking, hitting, biting, squeezing, hair pulling, etc.)		Average grade
Have you been physically bullied by other students at school? (kicking, hitting, biting, squeezing, hair pulling, etc.)	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.153*
	N	204
Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.153*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029
	N	204

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results show a negative and statistically significant correlation between experiencing physical bullying and academic achievement ($r = -0.153$, $p = 0.029$). The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.153) indicates that the more an adolescent experiences physical bullying, the lower their grade point average. Since $p = 0.029$ is less than the 0.05 significance level, the result is statistically significant. This means that the relationship between physical bullying and grade point average is not random and suggests a real impact of physical bullying on the academic achievement of adolescents. Hypothesis H4 (“Adolescents who are victims of physical bullying have poorer academic achievement than those who are not victims of physical bullying”) is supported by the data.

H5. Adolescents who are victims of sexual bullying have poorer academic performance than adolescents who are not victims of sexual bullying.

This analysis used the Pearson correlation, which measures the linear relationship between the experience of sexual bullying and academic performance, measured by grade point average. This test helps determine the impact of sexual bullying on adolescents' academic performance. Independent variable: Experience of sexual bullying, which includes unwanted physical contact or the use of abusive words of a sexual nature. Dependent variable: Adolescents' grade point average, which measures their academic performance.

Table 10. Hypothesis H5 Correlations

Have you been sexually bullied by others with unwanted physical contact or abusive words?		Average grade
Have you been sexually bullied by others with unwanted physical contact or abusive words?	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.311**
	N	.000
Average grade	Pearson Correlation	204
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1
	N	.000
		204

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a negative and statistically significant correlation between experiencing sexual bullying and academic achievement ($r = -0.311$, $p = 0.000$).

The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.311) indicates that the more an adolescent experiences sexual bullying, the lower their grade point average. Compared to the other forms of bullying analyzed previously, this relationship is stronger, suggesting a greater impact of sexual bullying on academic achievement. Since $p = 0.000$ is less than the 0.01 significance level, the result is statistically highly significant. This means that the relationship between sexual bullying and grade point average is not random and has a significant impact on the academic performance of adolescents. Hypothesis H5 (“Adolescents who are victims of sexual bullying have poorer academic achievement than those who are not victims of sexual bullying”) is strongly supported by the data.

H6. Female adolescents who are verbally bullied have poorer academic achievement than male adolescents who are verbally bullied.

This analysis used the Pearson correlation, which measures the linear relationship between experiencing sexual bullying and academic achievement, as measured by grade point average. This test helps determine the impact of sexual bullying on adolescents' academic performance. Independent variable: Experiencing sexual bullying, which includes unwanted physical contact or the use of sexually abusive language. Dependent variable: The adolescents' grade point average, which measures their academic achievement.

Table 11. Hypothesis H6 Correlations

Gender		Have you been verbally bullied by others by teasing you or “calling” you things? (name calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).		Average grade
Female	Have you been verbally bullied by others by teasing you or “calling” you things? (name calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).	Pearson Correlation	1	-.347**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	102	102
	Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.347**	1

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	102	102
Male	Have you been verbally bullied by others by teasing you or “calling” you things? (name calling, spreading rumors, or constant teasing).	Pearson Correlation	1	-.194
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.051
		N	102	102
	Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.194	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	
		N	102	102

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a negative and statistically significant correlation between experiencing sexual bullying and academic achievement ($r = -0.311$, $p = 0.000$).

The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.311) indicates that the more an adolescent experiences sexual bullying, the lower their grade point average. Compared to the other forms of bullying analyzed previously, this relationship is stronger, suggesting a greater impact of sexual bullying on academic achievement. Since $p = 0.000$ is less than the 0.01 significance level, the result is statistically highly significant. This means that the relationship between sexual bullying and grade point average is not random and has a significant impact on the academic performance of adolescents. Hypothesis H5 (“Adolescents who are victims of sexual bullying have poorer academic achievement than those who are not victims of sexual bullying”) is strongly supported by the data. Hypothesis H7 (“Female adolescents who are physically bullied have poorer academic achievement than male adolescents who are physically bullied”) is supported by the data.

H7. Female adolescents who are physically bullied have poorer academic achievement than male adolescents who are physically bullied.

For this analysis, the Pearson correlation was used, which measures the relationship between physical bullying and the academic achievement of adolescents, taking into account the differences between the female and male genders. This test provides an assessment of the strength and directions of the relationship between these two variables. Independent variable: Experiencing physical bullying, which includes acts such as kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, and hair pulling by other students.

Dependent variable: The average grade of adolescents, which measures their academic achievement. Second variable: Gender (Female/Male) as a modifiable factor in the impact of physical bullying on academic achievement.

Table 12. Hypothesis H7 Correlations

Gender		Have you been physically bullied by other students at school? (kicking, hitting, biting, squeezing, hair pulling, etc.)		Average grade
Female	Have you been physically bullied by other students at school? (kicking, hitting, biting, squeezing, hair pulling, etc.)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.391**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	102	102
	Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.391**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	102	102
Male	Have you been physically bullied by other students at school? (kicking, hitting, biting, squeezing, hair pulling, etc.)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.324**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
		N	102	102

Average grade	Pearson Correlation	-.324**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	102	102

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show a negative and statistically significant correlation between physical bullying and academic achievement for both genders.

- For females: The correlation coefficient is -0.391, with $p = 0.000$, indicating a strong negative association between physical bullying and academic achievement.
- For males: The correlation coefficient is -0.324, with $p = 0.001$, also indicating a negative association between physical bullying and academic achievement, but weaker compared to females.

In both cases, $p < 0.01$, meaning that the results are statistically significant and that the association between physical bullying and academic achievement is not due to chance.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of this study show a significant and negative association between bullying and adolescent academic achievement. Regardless of the type of bullying — verbal, cyber, physical, or sexual — all forms of bullying have a significant negative impact on adolescent academic performance. The data suggest that the more an adolescent is a victim of bullying, the lower their average grades. This result is particularly important for parents, teachers, and health professionals to consider, as bullying can have lasting consequences on adolescent development, including a direct impact on their academic achievement and mental health.

The study examined the correlation between different forms of bullying — physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying — and academic achievement among high school students in the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo. Findings indicate that bullying, in all its forms, is significantly associated with students' academic performance and overall school experience.

Verbal and social bullying were reported as the most prevalent forms among students, often occurring in the classroom and in social settings. These forms of bullying had a particularly negative impact on students' motivation, concentration, and participation in class, contributing to lower academic performance and reduced engagement in school. Cyberbullying, although less frequently reported, showed a strong correlation with increased school absenteeism and emotional distress, further hindering academic success.

Furthermore, students who reported being bullied frequently showed lower grade point averages and a reduced sense of belonging in school compared to their non-bullied peers. In contrast, students in more supportive school environments with effective anti-bullying policies showed higher resilience and better academic outcomes.

These results highlight the urgent need for comprehensive, evidence-based interventions in Prishtina secondary schools, focusing on bullying prevention, early identification of victims, and support systems for affected students. Schools need to engage not only students and teachers, but also parents and the wider community in creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment. Addressing bullying in all its forms is essential to promoting students' academic and emotional well-being.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations can be made to help reduce bullying/bullying and improve academic success among high school students in Prishtina:

- Implementing Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policies

Schools should develop and implement clear and consistent anti-bullying policies that address all forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, racist, sexual and cyberbullying. These policies should include procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to incidents.

- Raising Awareness and Providing Bullying Education

Educational programs should be introduced to help students, teachers and parents understand the different forms of bullying, their consequences and ways to respond. This could include workshops, seminars, peer education initiatives and classroom discussions.

- Establishing Support Systems for Victims

Schools should provide counseling services and mental health support for students who have experienced bullying. Access to trained school psychologists or counselors can help affected students regain self-confidence and academic focus.

- Encouraging Positive School Climate and Peer Relationships

Schools should promote an inclusive and respectful environment through extracurricular activities, peer mentoring programs, and initiatives that foster empathy and collaboration among students.

- Training Teachers and Staff

Teachers and school staff should receive regular training on how to identify signs of bullying, how to intervene effectively, and how to support both victims and perpetrators in positive behavior change.

- Promoting Parental Involvement

Parents should be actively engaged in efforts to combat bullying through regular communication with schools, participation in awareness programs, and reinforcement of positive values at home.

- Use Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

Schools and educational authorities should regularly monitor the prevalence and impact of bullying through anonymous surveys and feedback mechanisms. This data can inform ongoing improvements in anti-bullying strategies.

- Integrating Bullying Prevention into the Curriculum

Life skills and civic education curricula should include content on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and digital citizenship to help students face social challenges responsibly.

By implementing these recommendations, schools in the Municipality of Prishtina can create safer learning environments where all students have the opportunity to progress academically and personally.

7. Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between different forms of bullying and academic success among high school students in Prishtina, several limitations must be acknowledged:

Self-reported data: The study relied on self-reported questionnaires from students, which may be subject to bias. Respondents may under- or over-report their experiences with bullying or academic performance due to fear of judgment, misunderstanding of questions, or a desire to present themselves in a certain way.

Limited geographic scope: The research was conducted only in the Municipality of Prishtina, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions of Kosovo or countries with different social, cultural, or educational contexts.

Cross-sectional design: The study used a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. As a result, it cannot establish causal relationships between bullying and academic success – only associations can be identified.

Lack of qualitative data: The study focused primarily on quantitative data and did not include qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups that could have provided a deeper insight into students' personal experiences, coping strategies and perceptions of bullying and school support.

Potential under-representation of certain groups: Some student populations – such as those with disabilities, students from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who have dropped out of school due to bullying – may not have been sufficiently represented in the sample, potentially skewing the findings.

Variation in school policies and environments: Differences in how schools address and report bullying were not fully taken into account, which could affect students' willingness to disclose their experiences or their perception of school safety and support.

Academic success narrowly measured: Academic success was measured primarily through grade point average and attendance. Other important indicators such as motivation, class participation, or emotional well-being related to learning were not explored in depth.

Acknowledging these limitations is important for the accurate interpretation of the findings and for guiding future research that can build on and address these gaps.

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